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TECHNICAL HANDBOOK FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ENGINEERING  
VOLUME III - HEALTH CARE FACILITIES DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION  
**PART 21 - DESIGN CRITERIA AND STANDARDS**

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**CHAPTER 21-14 PARTNERING**

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**21-14.1 INTRODUCTION**

- A. PURPOSE - This technical handbook chapter provides guidelines and procedures for implementing the partnering process for Indian Health Service (IHS) health care facilities and quarters projects.
- B. BACKGROUND - In the late 1980's, the United States Army Corps of Engineers started its partnering process to reduce litigation occurring on construction contracts. Since then, other government agencies and the private sector have adopted the partnering process as a way to resolve conflicts before they evolve into formal disputes. The partnering process is now expanding to include the project design phase. Partnering does not replace the scope of work, contract documents, or legal requirements, but previous experience indicates that it reduces claims, and increases satisfaction of all participants.
- C. DEFINITION - The partnering process attempts to establish working relationships among the participants through a mutually-developed formal strategy of commitment and communication. It also attempts to create an environment where trust and teamwork prevent disputes, to foster a cooperative bond to everyone's benefit, and to facilitate the completion of a successful project. A formal partnering process requires the services of a third party facilitator in a work group, inclusive of all participants. An informal partnering process does not require a facilitator.

**21-14.2 GUIDELINES**

All IHS environmental health and engineering program (EHE) project officers and project managers, should use the formal partnering process for design and construction projects with an estimated total construction cost of \$2,000,000 or greater, including maintenance and improvements projects. An informal partnering process may be implemented for design and construction projects with an estimated total cost under \$2,000,000.

The following guidelines are available:

- (1) The Corps of Engineers Mobile District method, outlined in A Guide to Partnering for Construction Projects, latest edition;

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- (2) The Associated General Contractors of America, Partnering - A Concept for Success, September 1991;
- (3) The Construction Briefings, Partnering, Federal Publication Incorporated, February 1994; and
- (4) The Federal Construction Council, The Use of Partnering in the Facilities Design Process, Technical Report Number 126, 1994.

### **21-14.3 PROCEDURES**

Partnering requires time, effort and commitment throughout the project design, and construction phase. The partnering process must have the commitment of the top management of the IHS EHE program, the A/E, the tribe, and/or the construction contractor, in order to achieve the project's goals and objectives. The partnering process should be implemented as follows:

- (1) A statement that a design or construction project will be managed using the partnering process should be included in the Commerce Business Daily synopsis, the scope of work, and/or the bid solicitation notice. That statement will disclose IHS's preference for using the partnering process in management of the project, while noting that partnering requires the concurrence of all involved participants. The participants for the design projects should include IHS EHE program representatives, tribes, and architect/engineer (A/E) representatives. The participants for the construction projects should include IHS EHE program representatives, A/E, tribes, and construction contractor representatives. The statement will also note that pre-award or pre-bid conference will include a presentation on partnering. At the pre-award conference, a partnering presentation will be performed by the EHE program project manager in charge of the design project. At the pre-bid conference, the A/E's representative and the EHE program project manager assigned to the construction project both will give the partnering presentation. This presentation will provide the participants with an opportunity to:
  - Establish lines of communication;
  - Identify and manage critical contract elements;
  - Clarify roles and responsibilities;
  - Determine a process and method of dispute resolution; and
  - Help with team building.

A third party facilitator is essential for all formal partnering processes. The facilitator's role is to keep the focus on the partnering process, and to encourage all participants to state their needs, goals and objectives for the project.

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- (2) A partnering workshop should establish four principles: commitment, mutual trust, integrity, and personal pride, to achieve project goals. These goals should focus on the scope of work at the design phase, or the contract documents at the construction phase.

The EHE program project manager should schedule a workshop immediately after the design award is signed by the A/E, or a contract award is signed by the construction contractor. Depending on the project size, this workshop should last several days to facilitate proper interaction among all participants. This workshop should have exercises to enhance such skills as interpersonal communication, self-examination, team building, conflict management, and problem-solving. Other workshops should be held every three months as necessary to resolve issues, etc.

All participants in the partnering workshop will develop and agree to a partnering charter, which is a written list of project goals and objectives. It symbolizes the participants' commitment to partnering, and is a guide for cooperation. Each participant should sign the charter to show commitment to the partnering process. A charter is not a contract, and does not change the terms of previous or future contracts. A sample partnering charter is included in the Appendix A.

A follow-up meeting to the workshop should be held as soon as mutually agreed by all participants. Each participant should have a detailed partnering maintenance plan to review. This plan should consist of agreed-upon resolutions, and others to be addressed at the next workshop. Lessons learned from previous workshops need to be reinforced frequently, before and after the workshop. If the participants find that the plan is not working, it must be changed immediately.

Each participant should evaluate the effectiveness of the process participation periodically, in writing. A sample partnering evaluation and feedback form is included in the Appendix A.

#### **21-14.4 RESPONSIBILITIES**

The EHE program project manager will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of the partnering process, both formal and informal. The A/E at the design phase, or the construction contractor at the construction phase, will be responsible for coordinating the maintenance plan, and to which each participant should contribute. These participants can be the "Project Team" members as indicated in the IHS Technical Handbook For Health Facilities.

The EHE program project manager should establish a list of all participants immediately after the design award is signed by

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the A/E, or a contract award is signed by the construction contractor.

The participants at the design phase should include the IHS HQ EHE program project officer; the EHE program project manager; the Area construction coordinator, Chief Medical Officer, Safety Officer, and telecommunication/computer officer; the service unit director, and facility engineer; the tribal chairman/representative; the third party facilitator, if required; the A/E's representatives including project architect or engineer, design architect, four lead engineers preferably mechanical, electrical, site/utility, and cost engineers, and equipment planner, if required.

The participants at the construction phase should include the IHS HQ EHE program project officer; the EHE program project manager; the Area construction coordinator, and contracting officer; the service unit director; the tribal chairman/representative; the third party facilitator (if required); the A/E's project architect or engineer; and the construction contractor's representatives including project manager, project superintendent, and representatives from major sub-contractors.

Each participant should: 1) accept responsibility for their actions by avoiding unnecessary conflicts among members; 2) follow the partnering charter objectives; and 3) ensure that issues and resolutions are acted upon in a timely manner.

#### **21-14.5 COSTS**

Costs incidental to partnering, which include the facilitator's fee, expenses incurred by the administrative support staff, travel expenses incurred by the participants, and workshop facilities' fee, will be shared by the IHS, the A/E, the construction contractor, the tribes as appropriate, and/or other entity who has vested interest in the project.

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**APPENDIX A - SAMPLE PARTNERING CHARTER**

**Mission Statement**

We, the undersigned, recognize that we all have a common objective. We, therefore, agree to work together to **[design or construct]** the **[name of the IHS facility project]** on **[time, or time and safely,]** within the budget, and to the highest standards commensurate with the mission of serving the American Indians and Alaska Natives.

We believe the following principles should govern all interactions as we work to achieve our mission.

- Commitment,
- Mutual trust,
- Integrity, and
- Personal pride.

**Charter Objectives**

- (1) Maintain open lines of communication by:
  - Recognizing the need for quality information,
  - Minimizing the number of **[design changes or change orders]**, and
  - Responding in a timely manner.
- (2) Keep paper and administrative work to a minimum.
- (3) Avoid conflict by:
  - Maintaining an objective attitude toward **[design or building constructability and practicality]**,
  - Accepting responsibility for our actions or inactions,
  - Having empathy in all matters, and
  - Describing clearly the changes to **[design or construction]** work.
- (4) Develop and implement an alternative conflict resolution system to:
  - Resolve conflicts promptly, at the lowest possible level of **[design or construction]** staff,
  - Eliminate the need for a contracting officer's decisions,
  - Seek a fair interpretation of ambiguities found in the **[design drawings or contract documents]**, and
  - Act proactively, and not reactively, in problem-solving.
- (5) Limit cost growth by developing cost effective measures.

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- (6) Maintain a(n) [**efficient, or clean, efficient, secure,**] and friendly work environment by:
- Avoiding lost time due to accidents [**construction projects only**],
  - Staffing the [**design or construction**] project properly, and
  - Being a good listener.
- (7) Seek to maintain good [**IHS or A/E office, or construction site**] moral and attitudes by:
- Promoting partnering attitudes at all levels of contract administration,
  - Having fun, and
  - Taking pride in our work.
- (8) Commit to quality control in all project-related subject matters by:
- Doing it right the first time,
  - Maintaining proper work sequence [**construction projects only**],
  - Meeting the [**scope of work's/POR's or contract document's**] intent, and
  - Recognizing IHS needs in occupying and operating the facility [**construction projects only**].
- (9) Close out the [**design or construction**] phase in a proper and timely manner.
- (10) Maintain and implement a partnering evaluation system periodically.

**APPENDIX A - SAMPLE PARTNERING EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK FORM**

GOAL	LOW (1)	Below Average (2)	Average (3)	Above Average (4)	Excellent (5)
Building this project on time					

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Achieving quality levels identified in the scope of work or contract document					
Minimizing conflicts					
Finding win-win solutions to problems					
Providing a safe and secure work place					
Maintaining positive team relationships					
Promoting and maintaining good community relations					
Managing costs					
Building a maintainable facility that serves patients well and provides a pleasant environment for the staff					
Completing a facility in which the entire team will be justifiably proud					
Developing a resolution process as a interactive team					
Keeping partnering in motion					

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_ AVERAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation and suggestions for improvement/upcoming issues:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_